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Mobile Shower Pilot Near Homeless Encampments

As the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) continues to take action to combat and prevent homelessness in the County, it must pursue opportunities for individuals and families experiencing homelessness to access toilets, handwashing stations, and showers in order to safeguard public health, promote good personal hygiene, and help people experiencing homelessness regain some of their self-confidence and dignity.

On January 29, 2018, the Chief Executive Office (CEO) provided a report back to the Board on a directive to collaborate with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and other County departments, as needed, to explore a pilot for a mobile shower facility for people experiencing homelessness who reside in encampments. The report includes information on the feasibility, costs, and benefits of operating such a facility near homeless encampments in Los Angeles County.

As part of the report back, the CEO assessed the available options for a mobile

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shower pilot by consulting with stakeholders familiar with homeless services in Los Angeles County and researching existing mobile shower programs. In consultation with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and homeless services outreach workers, the CEO identified two sites near homeless encampments that would benefit from the placement of a mobile shower: Whittier Narrows Recreation Area (Park) and East Pasadena. The CEO also identified two mobile shower providers interested in operating pilot programs at these two sites: Lava Mae and Shower of Hope. Lava Mae has agreed to operate a pilot mobile shower program at the Park utilizing its existing private funding sources, and the 1st Supervisorial District will consider using its discretionary funds to continue supporting the program thereafter. Shower of Hope has agreed to self-fund operations of a pilot mobile shower program in East Pasadena for an initial period, and the 5th Supervisorial District has agreed to use its discretionary funds to support the pilot program thereafter.

In addition to the health and hygiene benefits of shower access, there are many other benefits associated with mobile shower programs for people experiencing homelessness. Mobile shower program providers report that access to showers can help individuals to retain and obtain employment, increase self-esteem, and improve well-being. Also, mobile shower programs offer a useful opportunity to increase engagement with people experiencing homelessness and may facilitate uptake of other services by program participants that may ultimately assist them in becoming housed.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Office, in collaboration with the Department of Public

Health, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and other County departments as needed, to work with Lava Mae to establish a mobile shower pilot program at Whittier Narrows Recreation Area and with Shower of Hope to establish a mobile shower pilot program in East Pasadena, as described in the January 29, 2018, CEO memorandum regarding Feasibility of Mobile Shower Facilities Near Homeless Encampments (Item No. 15, Agenda of November 28, 2017).

2. Direct the Department of Parks and Recreation to enter into any necessary, non-financial agreements with Lava Mae to enable the deployment of a mobile shower in Whittier Narrows Recreation Area.
3. Direct the Chief Executive Office, in collaboration with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and the mobile shower providers, to report back to the board on the effectiveness of the programs 90 days after the launch of the mobile shower pilot programs.

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SUP: HLS/jv